European Regional Bureau Newsletter

Internet Access

EU: Council of the EU publishes Review of progress on the Digital Single Market Strategy and Single Market Strategy

- Following the Commission's Mid-term review Communication on the Digital Single Market Strategy, the Council of the EU released on May 12 the "Review of progress on implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy and Single Market Strategy".

- This document reaffirms the Council's ambition to complete and implement the agreed Single Market strategies by 2018. In relation to data economy, the document states that the EU Institutions need to ensure that "data flows freely across the EU in order to benefit from the economic benefits that using and re-using data can bring".

EU: Mariya Gabriel confirmed as Digital Commissioner

- On May 16, the President of the European Commission President confirmed his intention to allocate the Digital Economy and Society portfolio to MEP Mariya Gabriel (EPP, BG). On the same day, President Juncker sent a Mission Letter to Mariya Gabriel, outlining her main objectives as Commissioner.

- Mariya Gabriel still needs to be confirmed by the European Parliament. A hearing before the parliamentary committees dealing with digital matters (IMCO and ITRE) is expected to take place in the upcoming weeks. In an interview with Politico, MEP Gabriel explained that her lack of digital experience was not problematic as the role is primarily political, not technical.

EU: Data Economy is first priority for the Estonian Presidency

- Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas gave a speech on May 16 on the priorities of the Estonian Presidency (July – Dec 2017), including a digital Europe and the free movement of data. Estonia's programme in the field of digital technology is considerable and ambitious, however the Prime Minister cautioned that building an e-Europe would take longer than the 6-month Presidency.

- The digital programme will focus on the Digital Single Market package but information technology is not an end on itself. There is a need for clear conditions to ensure a functional digital society, including the free movement of data, which, for Estonia, is a "5th fundamental freedom". He called the European Electronic

Communications Code a basis for the free movement of data and for high-speed and high-quality cross-border Internet access.

Trust

EU: 2017 GDPR Fablab – results of the discussions

- The Article 29 Working Party has released a [summary](#) of the FabLab workshop it organised with stakeholders in Brussels in April to discuss the forthcoming guidelines on profiling, consent and data breach notifications.
- The next guidelines are expected to be adopted after the Summer with stakeholders having been invited to send their comments and suggestions. It is also expected that a consultation should follow the adoption of the guidelines.

EU: EDA's First Cyber Defence Pooling & Sharing Project launched by 11 Member States

- On May 5, the Project Arrangement for the European Defence Agency (EDA)'s first ever [Cyber Defence Pooling & Sharing Project](#) was signed by all eleven contributing Member States, notably Austria, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden under the co-lead of the Netherlands, Finland and Greece.
- The objectives of the project includes (i) increasing the availability of existing and emerging cyber range facilities; (ii) increasing the occupation rate and efficiency of cyber ranges and platforms; (iii) improve cyber defence training, exercises and testing at European level.

EU: 11 countries push the European Commission on data flows in trade deals

- On May 15, a coalition of eleven countries (e.g. Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) sent a [letter](#) to EC First Vice President Frans Timmermans "underlining the importance of the ambitious EU position on rules on data flows and data localization measures in trade agreements", including ongoing talks with Japan and Mexico.
- In this letter, the signatories urge the Commission to be even more ambitious than the general outline presented in the concept paper drafted by the Commission in January, without this reducing the levels of protection granted by EU privacy rules.

EU: Giovanni Buttarelli addresses data protection, security and cooperation at EU level

- On May 15, at the European Data Protection Supervisor Giovanni Buttarelli, has given a [keynote speech](#) at the European Data Protection Days (EDPD) Conference, in Berlin. In his speech, Giovanni Buttarelli urged stakeholders to continue to provide for "more security and restore trust by setting world-wide standards, also with accountability".
- A few days after, on May 17 and 18, Giovanni Buttarelli attended the 19th Meeting of the Central and Eastern European Data Protection Authorities (DPAs). On that occasion, he [affirmed](#) laws are not enough to get concrete results, instead, there is a need "to ensure effective regulatory provisions through: the full independence of DPAs, proactivity, coherence and cooperation".

EU: European Parliament's ITRE and IMCO's committees voted on Online Platforms

- On May 18, the European Parliament Committees on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE) and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted Henna Virkkunen (EPP, FI) and Philippe Juvin (EPP, FR)'s [draft report](#) on Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market. The draft was adopted with 73 votes

- in favour, 16 against and 3 abstentions. An indicative plenary sitting date is set for 12 June 2017.
- In the document, the MEPs stressed the need for online platforms to inform users precisely what data is collected for and how it will be used, to ensure that anonymity is secured when handling personal data by third parties, and to give users the option not to share their data. Moreover, the draft highlights the importance of fair and effective competition between online platforms to promote consumer choice and to avoid the creation of monopolies or dominant positions.

EU: European Commission confirms Facebook sanctions on WhatsApp acquisition
- Facebook has been fined €110m by the European Commission which confirmed, on May 18, that Facebook misled the EU's competition body during the 2014 investigation into the acquisition of WhatsApp. The investigation focused on the possibility of share users' data from the messaging service with the social media company.
- EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager has stated that the decision was "a clear signal to companies that they must comply with all aspects of EU merger rules, including the obligation to provide correct information". On a different note, the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) said it was disappointing that the Commission had not revised its original decision in favour of the merger.

EU: Study on Cybersecurity in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy published
- The European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) has published a study for the European Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) Panel.
- The report "Cybersecurity in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) - Challenges and risks for the EU", and its annex, aim at identifying risks, challenges and opportunities for cyber-defence in the context of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The study focuses on three thematic areas: policies, capacity building, and the integration of cyber in the CSDP missions, with the last one being the main focus of the study.